

## **Niswonger Foundation Grant Progress Report: 2016**

The International Storytelling Center (ISC) greatly appreciates the 3-year grant support from the Niswonger Foundation on behalf of ISC's programming. In 2016, the grant provided support for: live streaming at the National Storytelling Festival; pro bono outreach to school-aged children through ISC's Teller-in-Residence (TIR) program; and a teacher workshop, also provided through ISC's TIR program.

### **Summary of Progress**

ISC's 2016 programming has concluded and we are pleased to report that our objectives towards the goal of bringing live professional storytelling and diverse, excellent art into the lives of as many young people as possible were met for the year.

### **Description of Activities and Documentation/Data Evaluating Success**

#### National Storytelling Festival Livestreaming

ISC provided a live-streaming feed from the National Storytelling Festival's Library (Family) Tent on Friday October 7<sup>th</sup>.

ISC reached out to several national and international organizations that would benefit from the stream, including schools, universities, hospitals, and nursing homes. Locally, Mountain States Health Alliance livestreamed the performances into patients' rooms at Johnson City Medical Center and Niswonger Children's Hospital. Additionally, regional sponsor Dollywood DreamMore Resort and Spa sent an e-blast of the livestream link to its entire database of more than 500,000 people.

Nationally, the Endowment of the Arts promoted the livestream link in advance of the event to all fifty United States arts agencies as well as the National Poetry Foundation and the National Poetry Out Loud program.

To improve the experience of the livestream for those viewing, ISC oversaw the installation of permanent, custom-made internet cables that were wired to run directly into the Library Tent. This provided higher streaming quality with no interruptions. Other new efforts included having a volunteer to facilitate a live chat during the duration of the streaming. A sample of those comments are found below:

This live stream made my day! So happy you all provided it- a gift- the gift of story- many thanks.

So glad to be able to share this with my kids. I grew up going to the storytelling festival, and I'm grateful to be able to pass on the experience. THANK YOU!

This is wonderful!! I've visited the Center but never been able to attend the Festival. Thank you!!

The livestream was viewed in 33 countries (illustration attached). Viewers were able to see the work of 14 of the Festival's 18 featured tellers. All programming was ASL interpreted.

ISC worked with interns from ETSU's communication department who assisted us in using social media and the live streaming content as a means of encouraging greater participation from the millennial generation.

Post-festival, we made the recorded video available via our website.

#### Outreach to School-aged Children through ISC's Teller-in-Residence program

ISC held three TIR Saturday morning on-site shows geared specifically to children ages 6 to 10. We also conducted nine off-site and two on-site pro-bono concerts for area school-aged children in Washington, Greene, Hawkins and Sullivan counties. This included performances for the Washington County Library system's Summer Reading Program and performances for underserved youth. Through these activities, young people were exposed to the work of ten Tellers-in-Residence. These storytellers are considered among the finest in the storytelling art and have all appeared at ISC's signature event, the renowned National Storytelling Festival. We are excited to report that the total number of youth served by these complimentary performances was 1,752, a growth of 49% over 2015.

In September, ISC offered a free teacher workshop called *Imagination and Education*. This was led by Tim Lowry, a storyteller with extensive experience working with classroom students and teachers. Thirty-three teachers attended, and came from schools in the Johnson City and Kingsport city school systems as well as Washington, Sullivan, Hawkins, Sevier, Jefferson, Cocke, and Greene Counties.

Some sample comments from the workshop evaluations included:

- *Excellent workshop! The ideas are excellent to expand higher level thinking skills.*
- *Very informative and engaging.*
- *This was great; as was last year. Thoroughly enjoyed. Well worth the time!*
- *Great ideas. Storytellers involved in education are always wonderful.*

#### **Budget and expenditure report – see attached**

#### **Plan for sustainability of project beyond grant**

After completing the second year of a three year grant term, we believe we will be able to continue our funded programs post-grant through greater ticket sales, advertising opportunities, and continued arts funding grants at the state and federal level.

#### **Success/Challenge of Grant and Lessons learned**

As in 2015, one challenge we faced this year involved the bad weather at the National Storytelling Festival. Hurricanes and flooding in states further south resulted in heavy periods of rain in NE TN. Due to issues with our livestream Internet connection in 2015, we went to great lengths to strengthen our connection for 2016 and to ensure that livestream coverage was not interrupted. As a result, we did not experience any difficulties.

**Niswonger Foundation Grant  
Budget and Expenditure Report  
2016**

**Budget**

Live Streaming the National Storytelling Festival	\$ 3,500.00
Underwriting Support for ISC's Children's Programming	\$ 2,000.00
Elementary School Teacher Workshop	\$ 500.00
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$ 6,000.00</b>

**Allocated Expenditures**

Live Streaming the National Storytelling Festival	
Digital Fridge - Technical Streaming Services	\$ 1,800.00
Artists Fees	\$ 1,700.00
Underwriting Support for ISC's Children's Programming	
Artists Fees	\$ 500.00
Artists Travel/Lodging	\$ 500.00
Children's Ticket Subsidy	\$ 1,000.00
Elementary School Teacher Workshop	
Teacher Workshop Subsidy - 33 Teachers x \$30 = \$990	\$ 500.00
<b>Total Allocated Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 6,000.00</b>



Figure 5: Livestream feed across the globe